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Similarweb State of Ecommerce 2026 Report Details How AI is Changing Shopper Journey

Report shows that consumer AI conversations augment search, rather than replacing it, but AI chat recommendations give brands a significant advantage

TEL AVIV, Israel--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- [Similarweb](https://www.similarweb.com) (NYSE: SMWB) explores the many ways AI, apps, and other transformational forces are changing online shopping in its State of Ecommerce 2026 report, published today.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260910901157/en/

Chart shows how much more likely consumers are to buy a brand recommended by AI.

Despite increasing more than 200% over the past year, direct referrals from dedicated AI platforms don't produce a large volume of traffic to ecommerce marketplaces and online stores. In other words, compared with search, AI conversations don't result in as much immediate click-through traffic. However, AI buying recommendations exert an outsize influence on purchases – in some cases, giving the recommended brand a 2-to-1 advantage over its competitors.

Consumers are making ChatGPT, Gemini, and other conversational AI tools a routine part of the buying process. However, that doesn't mean they are abandoning search – 89% of the time, consumers who use AI in their shopping research also use search.

"Consumers are not switching tools – they are stacking them," said Daniel Reid, Principal Insight Analyst, Consumer Goods & Retail at Similarweb and the lead author of the report. "People are using AI to explore and narrow options while still turning to Search to move toward a decision. The most complex journeys, the ones that use both, convert the best. Retailers and brands who figure out how to master these new paths to product discovery stand to benefit."

Similarweb released this report in collaboration with Statista, which contributed a section of predictions on "What Comes Next." This includes the forecast that global B2C ecommerce revenue will reach over 4.9 trillion U.S. dollars by 2030, an increase of over 27% from 2026.

In addition to providing much more detail on the impact of AI, the report covers the continuing trend toward ecommerce shifting from the web toward apps, with ecommerce app sessions growing at roughly 1.3x the rate of web visits and 86.5% of U.S. consumers saying they primarily shop on a smartphone or tablet.

Additional sections break down the global and regional trends and give a detailed analysis of these ecommerce market segments:

- Marketplaces
- Beauty & Cosmetics
- Consumer Electronics
- Fashion & Apparel
- Home & Garden

Overall, traffic to ecommerce websites is up 6.8% year-over-year. Within Marketplaces such as amazon.com, clothing, shoes, and jewelry represent the strongest category, with unit sales up 33.7% in the U.S., while the electronics category barely grew at all (+1.5%).

To read the full report, visit:
https://www.similarweb.com/corp/reports/state-of-ecommerce-2026/

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